

6. Concerning Redemption

A. PBCC Statement

Jesus Christ, who lived a sinless life on earth, voluntarily gave his life as a sacrifice for all the sins of mankind, was buried and rose bodily from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Father as Lord. He uniquely satisfied the just requirement of God for death as the penalty for sin. All who believe in Him are forever reconciled to God solely through Jesus' death on the cross. Everyone who is called into this relationship by God is granted every spiritual blessing that is in Christ, and will be perfected with Him. Nothing can separate the believer from the love of Christ.

[Luke 23:46; John 19:30; Acts 2:32-36; Rom 3:21-26; 8:29-39; 10:8-11; Eph 1:3-12; Phil 1:6; 1 John 2:2]

Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:46)

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

³²This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. ³⁴For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

"The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand,
³⁵ until I make your enemies your footstool."

³⁶Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified." (Acts 2:32-36)

²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (Rom 3:21-26)

²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³²He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

"For your sake we are being killed all the day long;
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom 8:29-39)

⁸But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); ⁹because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. ¹¹For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." (Rom 10:8-11)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. (Eph 1:3-12)

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. (Phil 1:6)

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

B. Creedal Statements

1. Apostle's Creed

I believe...in Jesus Christ our Lord; who...suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the father Almighty.

2. Nicene Creed

Lord Jesus Christ...Who...was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father.

C. Discussion

We affirm certain historical facts about Jesus: he suffered, was crucified, descended into hell, rose again, ascended to heaven, and took his seat at God's right hand.

1. The Obedience of Christ

Obedience: two aspects:

- active obedience: "lived a sinless life on earth".
- passive obedience: Jesus obediently accepted all the suffering inflicted upon him.

Faithfulness

Jesus was faithful to his vocation: Adam's vocation, Israel's vocation. He did what Adam and Israel had failed to do.

2. Suffering

Jesus suffered (passion, Lat. *passus*) at the hands of both Jew and Gentile.

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3. Crucifixion

Crucifixion on a cross (Lat. *crux*) was the most extreme form of Roman capital punishment.

Why did Jesus die?

- **Jews** condemned him as a blasphemer.
 - **Sadducees** saw him as a threat to their power and stability.
 - **Pharisees** saw him as a threat to purity.
- **Romans** (Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, Samaria and Idumea, 26-36), while recognizing Jesus' innocence, crucified him as a rebel (Gk *lēistēs*) in place of Barabbas.
- **Jesus** died in obedience to his Father.
- **God?** Did God put Jesus to death to bring about our atonement?

The Atonement: the death of Jesus was for our atonement (reconciliation with God). There are different views of how this works:

1. **Christus Victor**: early church. Christ's death defeated the powers of evil: sin, death, Satan. Orthodox church; recent resurgence of popularity.
2. **Ransom theory**: early church. God offered Jesus to Satan as a ransom in exchange for sinners. Satan accepted the exchange, but Jesus escaped his hold in hell, rising from the dead.
3. **Subjective or exemplary theory**: the crucifixion shows how much God loves us; its subjective effect upon us is that we respond in love. First proposed by Abelard (1079-1142).
4. **Satisfaction theory**: first proposed by Anselm (ca. 1033-1109, Archbishop of Canterbury), further developed by the Reformers. Sin damages God, for which God must seek satisfaction (distributive justice: God rewards virtue and punishes sin). Sinful man owes the satisfaction but only the sinless God can actually pay it. Satisfaction is provided by Jesus as our substitute. Because Jesus did not sin, he did not have to suffer any penalty or offer any satisfaction. Therefore God accepted his death as satisfaction for man.
 - a. Anselm: sin damages God because it is an affront to his majesty and honor. Through the substitutionary death of Jesus, God's honor is satisfied.
 - b. Aquinas (1225-1274): Christ voluntarily died, receiving our punishment as the penalty owed by original sin. The superabundance of his merit led to the idea of the Treasury of Merit. One is saved by drawing on Christ's merit through the sacraments. The official Catholic position, affirmed by the Council of Trent.
 - c. Calvin (1509-1564): sin is a breaking of God's law. Jesus paid the penalty for breaking God's law—penal substitutionary atonement. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, just as our guilt was imputed to him. Through the atoning death of Christ, our sin is expiated (removed) and God is propitiated (his wrath is appeased). Limited to those for whom Christ died.
5. **Moral government theory**: Christ suffered in humanity's place so God could forgive humans without punishing them while still maintaining divine justice.
6. **N. T. Wright**: Jesus, as Israel's representative, bore the curse that was Israel's for her failure to keep covenant. With Israel's destiny fulfilled, salvation can now come to the Gentiles. God's righteousness is fulfilled by declaring that those who are in Christ are his covenant people.

But now, quite apart from the law (though the law and the prophets bore witness to it), *God's covenant justice* [*dikaiosynē*] has been displayed. *God's covenant justice* comes into operation through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah, for the benefit of all who have faith. For there is no distinction: all sinned, and fell short of God's glory—and by God's grace they are freely declared to be in the right [*dikaioumenoi*], to be members of the covenant, through the redemption which is found in the Messiah, Jesus.

God put Jesus forth as the place of mercy, through faithfulness, by means of his blood. He did this to demonstrate *his covenant justice* [*dikaiosynē*], because of the passing over (in divine forbearance) of sins

committed beforehand. This was to demonstrate *his covenant justice* [*dikaioynē*] in the present time: that is, that he himself is in the right [*dikaios*], and that he declares to be in the right [*dikaioutai*] everyone who trusts in the faithfulness of Jesus. (Rom 3:21-26)⁸

Sacrifice: Jesus sacrifice for us was substitutionary (vicarious).

Reconciliation: we are reconciled to God:

- expiation: removal of sin with its guilt and penalty
- propitiation: appeasement of God's wrath
- forgiveness:

Extent of the atonement:

- limited/particular: Christ died to save the elect.
- universal: Christ died for all and will save all.
- Christ's atoning death is sufficient for all, efficient for the elect, i.e., universal in provision, particular in application.

4. Descent into hell

Jesus descended into the realm of the dead (Heb *Sheol*, Gk *Hades*), not the place of eternal punishment (Gk *Gehenna*). This clause, inserted into the Apostles' Creed in the 4th century, and not universally accepted, affirms that Jesus really died. He delivered the OT saints from this realm (harrowing of hell).

5. Resurrection

God's vindication of Jesus' obedience. Proof that the power of death had been defeated.

6. Ascension and Session

- Forty days after the resurrection, Jesus entered heaven, where he was glorified.
- Session: Jesus entered heaven as the victorious king (Christus Victor). He reigns from heaven now as King over God's kingdom. From heaven he sends the Spirit and distributes the spoils of victory (spiritual gifts).
- Implications for believers: those who are "in Christ" are identified with him in his death and resurrection, and will be identified with him in his ascension and glorification. In rising from the dead and ascending to heaven, he is the firstfruits.

8. N.T. Wright, *The Kingdom New Testament* (HarperOne, 2011); *The Day the Revolution Began* (HarperOne, 2016), 305-6, 318.

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